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NIE 36-64 ADVCON
8 April 1964

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

MAIN TRENDS IN THE ARAB WORLD

- The Role of the Military
- Economic and Social Development
- Prospects for Political Change
- The Arabs and Israel
- Foreign Relations

NOTE: This is an advance copy of the conclusions of this estimate as approved by the United States Intelligence Board. The complete text will be circulated within five days of this issuance.

Central Intelligence Agency

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Submitted by the

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Defense, AEC and NSA.

Concurred in by the

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

on 8 April 1964. Concurring were the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; the Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the USIB; and the Director of the National Security Agency. The Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of his jurisdiction.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

8 April 1964

SUBJECT: NIE 36-64: MAIN TRENDS IN THE ARAB WORLD*

THE PROBLEM

To estimate general trends in the Arab world over the next several years.

CONCLUSIONS

A. Political turmoil in the Arab world appears likely to continue for many years to come. The military have come to play an increasing role, but -- except in Egypt -- they have not proved to be a stabilizing factor. Iraq and Syria in particular are likely to remain highly unstable. The monarchies in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Libya will come under increasing revolutionary nationalist pressure, and one or more of them may be extinguished in the next several years. Nasser appears likely to remain the single most influential Arab leader. The noteworthy economic and social progress of the past ten years will continue although, as in the past, it will be uneven and varied.

B. The emotional appeal of Arab unity will remain very strong, but in general the pan-Arab movement is likely to be confined to the kind of cooperation among independent countries as occurred at the Cairo summit meeting in January 1964.

* This paper does not cover Sudan and the Maghreb.

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C. Arab attitudes toward Israel remain basically hostile, but a fair proportion of Arabs have gradually come privately and reluctantly to accept the fact that Israel will exist for many years to come. The Arab-Israeli arms race will cause tensions and could lead to limited or selective hostile action. Other danger points are the Jordan waters problem and the possibility of Israeli military action in the event of a radical political change in Jordan. Nevertheless, the general inhibitions on open warfare would be strong and a serious rise in tensions could probably be contained by great power pressures.

D. Arab relations with the West remain heavily influenced by hatred of "imperialism" and by Western support of Israel. The possibility of a sudden deterioration of Western relations with the Arabs over Israel is always present. The Arab nationalists generally will press for termination of Western base rights in the area. While they will also press for a greater share of oil revenues and a greater degree of participation in production, nationalization appears unlikely.

E. The Soviets probably believe that the tide is running against the West in the Arab world and that they can capitalize on the unsettled political situation and upon various tensions between the Arabs and West. If US-Arab relations should deteriorate sharply, there would probably be a noticeable strengthening of Soviet influence. We do not believe, however, that this would result in one-sided reliance on the Soviets or a more accommodating attitude toward local Communist parties.

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